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Kennedy Shoulders The Blame

President Kennedy has assumed full responsibility for American participation in the invasion of Cuba by refugees. There is no other course he can take under the circumstances. To do otherwise would be a public admission that there is a weak President in the White House.

The efforts of some persons, with Interior Secretary Udall spearheading the attack, to place the blame for the failure on former President Eisenhower is little short of the familiar old custom of seeking a scapegoat.

If there is to be blame for this ill-starred attempt to unseat Fidel Castro the finger must point more at the Central Intelligence Agency than anywhere else. This is the organization which assessed the situation in Cuba and which recommended the invasion. The weakness in this situation is that persons not versed in military lore are placed in a position of advising or advocating action. A tactical decision should be in the hands of those trained in military operations.

In the face of demands that the dismal failure be probed, President Kennedy has stolen a march on Congress. He has named a panel headed by General Taylor, former chief of staff, to begin one phase of inquiry while Attorney General Kennedy will look into other aspects. This action takes the wind out of congressional sails since there is little left for Congress to investigate.

During the election campaign Mr. Kennedy had much to say concerning the inactivity of the Eisenhower administration in dealing with the Cuban problem. It seems obvious that Mr. Eisenhower sanctioned the arming of Cuban exiles and approved special training they required for guerrilla warfare. Mr. Kennedy continued this part of the program and then gave approval for the actual attempt at invasion. It appears that the campaign criticism of the Eisenhower administration was baseless.

The experience of the military action tends to indicate that the training program was inadequate and that there are other weaknesses. This is the area on which the probes should center their attention and lead to corrective measures of this country's general military program.

There are so many areas of failure involved in the operation that many scapegoats could be unearthed. To do so accomplishes nothing. Mr. Kennedy is willing to assume complete responsibility for what has taken place. What he wants now is to ferret out the weaknesses and thus establish a form of insurance against similar failures in the future.